

March 21, 2010

Mr. Chairmen/Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Roberta Wilmot; I am here to speak on S.B. No. 1196 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PARCELS OF STATE LAND- Section 9 - the removal of the deed restrictions from Coventry Historical Society property at 2187 South Street, Coventry, Connecticut

The parcel of land I am speaking on is the Sprague House South St. Coventry, Ct owned by the Coventry Historical Society. The Society is looking to divest itself of this property really in order to save it. Sprague House was the headquarters of the Society until we obtained the Strong-Porter House also located on South St. Public safety issues were of a concern also when using this facility for public meetings...lack of off street parking, grade level for entrance into the house and building capacity.

The Society at this time owns three properties: Strong-Porter Museum...headquarters & archives; one room brick Schoolhouse and Sprague. On the grounds of Strong-Porter Museum, also requiring constant maintenance, are a three-bay carriage shed, a barn with a lean-to, a three-hole plaster walled outhouse and a blacksmith shop. Thanks to matching grants, fundraisers, and donations by businesses in town the Society has managed to keep our buildings in fairly good repair but times have changed...the economy has changed.

With the removal of the present deed restrictions, the ability to sell this property with the caveats being placed on the sale, we feel the house would be able to be stabilized and continue on as an historic house into the future. The Society would also gain funds that are sorely needed for maintenance on our other properties, educational programming for the community and investing for the future of the Society.

The Society was very thankful to have obtained the Sprague House when they had no place to call home. We were even more grateful when we were able to acquire the Strong-Porter property from the State. Both of these properties surround our state hero's home, Nathan Hale. We value both of these houses and want to see them "live" into the future.

Respectfully,
Roberta E. Wilmot
Past President, Coventry Historical Society
Coventry Planning & Zoning Commission - Member
Coventry Economic Development Commission - Member
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